TO

MAINARD COLCHESTER, Esq;

SIR,

I Should have much rejoyc'd at *the Election of our County* of *Glouceſter*, had they not unhappily diſhonour'd it with the choice of ſo Unworthy a Perſon as Sir *Richard Cocks*, after the Hopes we at firſt conceiv'd of him, hath ſhewed himſelf at laſt. But however, I am glad they have made choice of one, of whom I have better hopes for the faithful performance of the Truſt repos'd in you, and conſcientious diſcharge of the Duty of that Place, both to God and Man, to the beſt of your Ability; and more eſpecially at ſo critical a Time as this. His Majeſty hath ſo well repreſented the *State of the Nation* in general, in His *Proclamation for the Faſt*, that if I could but ſee a like Senſe of it in *this Houſe of Commons*, I ſhould have good hopes of attaining that Divine Favour, which was the End he propoſed in it. But that will require a *juſt Examination*, and *good Conſideration* of all the *Particulars* of what he has mentioned only in general. And becauſe I have never yet ſeen any ſuch thing done in this Nation, as it ought to be; and ſee as little hopes of it now as ever, I have endeavoured to perform that Fidelity both to God and to my Country, which I could not expect from any one elſe. This I have done in ſome *Neceſſary Obſervations upon the Proclamation*; to which I have annexed ſome *other Papers*, printed upon ſeveral Occaſions, but all in order to the ſame End, for rectifying the Caſe of this Nation, in reſpect of the chief Matters in Difference, both Eccleſiaſtical and Civil, under the General Title of *A Meſſage of Peace*, &c. Which I herewith ſend you, not as to a private Friend, but as a Truſtee for my Country, and one who I hope will ſhew your ſelf more a Chriſtian, than any of the Members of the two laſt Parliaments have done; if it were but upon the Conſideration of

the *Common Obligations* of all ſuch Truſtees; but I have elſewhere noted ſome Matters of *Special Obligation* upon You more than others. And truly if your Devotion to God, your Fidelity to your Country, and your Zeal for Reformation of Manners, and a National Reformation, do not excite you to act Vigorouſly and Generouſly, beyond the Common Prudentials of this degenerate Age, beyond all reſpect to Friendſhip, or regard to the Cenſures of Men, for the Honour of God, and of the Chriſtian Religion; for the Reformation of the Chief of thoſe *Manifold Sins and Provocations*, which have brought your Country into ſuch *imminent Danger*; for the Aſſertion and Maintenance of ſo Fundamental a Right of all the Commons of *England*, as hath been abuſed by one of your Predeceſſors, and neglected and diſ-regarded by your fellow Member now for your own County; and for the Averting of the Judgments of God from this Nation at this time, by juſt and exemplary Puniſhment of the Principal Offendors; your Religion will be judged Vain, your Fidelity to your Country no better than Self-Intereſt, and your Zeal for Reformation but crafty Hypocritical Affectation of Popularity; and by the Scandal thereof, defeat all the Good you have hitherto been doing, and make all an occaſion of ſo much the greater Miſchief. But I hope better things of you, tho' I thus write. You know ſo much of theſe things already, that I need not repeat more than are in the printed Papers. But becauſe ſo Notorious a Criminal as Sir *Richard Cocks* hath had the Confidence to appear in his Country again upon ſuch a Service, I muſt ſet out what I think will be a ſufficient Conviction of his Unworthineſs, evermore to ſit among Truſtees for the Commons of *England*, or to be imploy'd in any Publick Service.

There are three very *neceſſary Qualifications* requiſite in a Perſon fit to be choſen for a Member of Parliament, Fidelity to his Country, Piety to God, and Civil Prudence. Where true *Piety* is wanting, there can be no *compleat Fidelity*; and where *Civil Prudence* is wanting, the other two are not ordinarily likely to be very ſerviceable: But where all are wanting, there is more danger of Miſchief from ſuch a Perſon, than likelihood of any Good. Theſe are things proper to be conſider'd before an Election: But when *great Faults* againſt all, or any of theſe, have been *committed in Parliament*, theſe are as proper, to be inquired, examined and puniſhed there. *The Corruption and Impiety of the Honſe of Commons* has been Notorious for many years, commonly laugh'd at by many, and lamented by others; and upon that

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Consideration I took occasion from a complicated Wickedness against the Fear of God, and the Honour of the King, and the Safety of the true *English* Government by a revived *Pretence of the Growth of Popery*, to send *a Complaint* of these things to Sir *Richard Cocks*, being one of the Knights of the Shire of our County. And because he had before *pocketed up a Letter* of like Complaint, to prevent that, I caus'd a small, but sufficient, number of this Letter to be printed, and sent amongst the Members. What *Vote* was passed upon it is to be seen in Prints: The part acted by that Worthy Baronet, was first in the House, a Wise Speech (as it seems he thought) to prove the Author of the Letter a Mad-man: And secondly, out of the House, to repeat that Speech in Coffee-houses and Taverns. And in his Behaviour upon these two Letters, I shall observe such Faults in all the respects aforesaid, as make his Election a Shame to his Country, and his Sitting and Voting, if it should be permitted, dishonourable and inexcusable in the House.

His *Unfaithfulness to his Country*, in suppressing and Stifling the first Complaint, and, when he could not again do that, in so foulely opposing the next, being both of so great Concern, both to Religion, to the Government, and to the Rights of all the Commons of *England*, is apparently such as no Man, who hath any Sense of any of those, can think pardonable, or any way excusable, or to be passed by without Exemplary Punishment.

Nor is his *Impiety* less, or less manifest and observable. What ever his Profession and external Popular Actions may be, it is certain he can have no deep Root of Piety in his Heart, or Sense of the Honour of God, and of the Concern and Danger of his Country by such Provocations, when the very Fountains of Justice and Righteousness are so corrupted, as in the other Letter is declared) and not speak in such a Case, and when so specially obliged, to good purpose. Even *Silence* it self had been an unanswerable Evidence of this. But what was it then to oppose and contradict so necessary a Duty and Obligation? to oppose it in such a *Manner*, with a *Lye*, a Lye against his own Conscience and Knowledge? a Lye so easily detected, as by the only Inspection and Consideration of that very Letter? and with so much Injury to an Innocent Person, of his own Country, for which he serves, a Gentleman, and at the same time in Commission of the Peace in that County, who hath lived in good Reputation and Esteem with the best People there all his time, without any blot, and which is more than all this, dedicated to

the ſpecial Service of God, and approv'd himſelf a Faithful Servant to God and to his Country upon all publick Occaſions; and in this very buſineſs in particular? And to oppoſe it in ſuch a manner for ſo wicked purpoſe, to cover ſuch a wicked Fountain of Sin? If this Impiety, with all theſe *Aggravations*, be not as inexcuſable and deſerving as exemplary Puniſhment, as the other unfaithfulneſs; certainly either there is no ſuch thing as Impiety at all, or they who think this not ſuch are too deeply infected with it.

And for *Civil Prudence*, how can ſo much Vanity in ſuch Repetition, of ſuch a Speech, in ſuch Places, and even glorying in his Shame, be conſiſtant with any great portion of it? But this deſerves no farther mention, when matters of ſuch moment, as thoſe before mentioned, come to be conſidered: Either of which alone being ſufficient for his Condemnation; much more when two ſuch are to be made examplary upon ſuch an Occaſion as the Averting of the Judgments of God from the Nation.

I am in good earneſt ſorry for him, and for whatever concerns my ſelf, could eaſily paſs it by: But ſince the Honour of God, and of Religion, and the Safety and Happineſs of the Nation, doth ſo much depend upon it, that there be ſome conſiderable Examples of condign Puniſhment made for due Correction of ſuch Impiety, and recovery of the Favour of God, and averting his impendent Judgments, I cannot but think it dangerous both for the Nation, and for the Criminals themſelves to let ſuch eſcape at ſuch a time as this. And though he be principally and more ſpecially concern'd, yet could not ſuch Vote be paſſed but others muſt have been Promoters of it, who are therefore fit and neceſſary to be made Examples in this Caſe. The *Vote* then paſſed is falſe, impious, fooliſh and diſhonourable to the Commons of *England* to have had ſuch a Pack of Repreſentatives in that Houſe: and if I underſtand any thing, this is like to prove a TEST upon you and this Whole Houſe, Whether you can have any due regard to the Honour of the Holy Majeſty of God, if You do not all humble your ſelves upon this *Admonition*, and without more ado unanimouſly confeſs ſo notorious Impiety, ſet a Mark of Infamy upon that impious prevalent Faction and their Proceedings in that Parliament, and inflict ſome proper Exemplary Puniſhment upon this and ſome other Principal Criminals. I have done my part, and now leave it to your own Conſciences, what is fit to be done, as you will anſwer it to God, whoſe Honour is ſo immediately concerned in it.

Your Humble Servant,

EDWARD STEPHENS.

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